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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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SECRET

September 21, 1964

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EXCEPTION EXEMPT DATE
TO AUTH. REASON(S)
REPORT EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☒ NOT CLASSIFIED ☐
REVIEW [illegible]
A. [illegible] POLICY EXCEPTION

TO : M - Governor Harriman

THROUGH: S/S ECT

FROM : FE - Marshall Green

SUBJECT: Resumption of DeSoto Patrols

(Tab C)

CINCPAC has just come in with a telegram giving military justifications for a continuation of the DeSoto Patrol. He doesn't specifically urge its early resumption but the import of his message (he says a more detailed comment will follow) is that we should get some more destroyers up in the Gulf of Tonkin as soon as possible.

(Tab B)

I question the need or desirability of another DeSoto Patrol in the next several weeks. Most of the reasons have been well stated by Lindsey Grant in the attached memorandum. Additional to his arguments, I think we should recall how the South Vietnamese tended after the first Tonkin incident to feel that the U.S. could do the job for them by attacking the north. When this turned out not to be the case, there was a feeling of letdown.

I think we must also recognize that many people would regard our operations so deep into the Tonkin Gulf as unnecessary (we cannot disclose the full reasons) and certainly high provocative. If the DRV does attack our next patrol, we will certainly have to take at least as strong retaliatory moves as we did last time. This in itself would involve some major consequences.

Attachment:
Mr. Grant's Top Secret Memo

FE:MGreen:ej

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